United Nations A/AC.109/2001/19

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 June 2001

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from June 2000 to May 2001

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 55/145 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly considered it important "to continue its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization" and requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat to "take measures through all the media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization". The present report, prepared in response to the above mandate, covers the activities undertaken by the Department in the field of decolonization during the period from June 2000 to May 2001.

2. The Department's activities pertaining to decolonization focused on coverage of the work of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, building partnerships with civil society through the network of United Nations information centres and strengthening the use of the Internet for the widest possible dissemination of information.

II. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

3. The Department provided full and comprehensive coverage of the General Assembly debate on decolonization, including in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee on decolonization. Special attention was paid to the opening of the 2001 session of the Special Committee. A background release, issued on the occasion, traced the decolonization process and explained the role of the Special Committee. The statement made by the Secretary-General at its opening was issued and widely disseminated. Attention was also paid to the views expressed by various members of the Special Committee. All press releases issued at Headquarters were distributed electronically to the network of United Nations information centres worldwide.

4. The Department also provided daily coverage of the proceedings of the Caribbean regional seminar organized by the Special Committee at Havana from 23 to 25 May 2001. A press officer of the Department was present to report on the deliberations. A background release was issued, highlighting the mandate of the Special Committee and the programme of action for the

01-40840 (E) 140601

Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010).

III. Coverage of developments in East Timor

5. Developments in East Timor continued to be reported by the Department. Particular attention was paid to the registration for election of the Timorese people and the response of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to violence against Timorese civilians. The Department also reported on developments concerning the transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Timor.

6. The Department facilitated the delivery of a message by the Secretary-General to the people of East Timor on the first anniversary of the popular consultation. Together with the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the Department organized a film presentation on the life of Nobel laureate José Ramos-Horta and a panel discussion on East Timor in October 2000. It also assisted in the presentation by the Elie Wiesel Foundation of its Humanitarian Award to UNAMET.

7. The Department continued to assist the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) with its information programme both inside the Territory and outside. It helped identify and select information officers and a graphic designer for UNTAET. It also organized a briefing visit by the Director of Public Information of UNTAET to United Nations Headquarters in March and April 2001.

IV. United Nations radio and television

8. The Department's radio and television sections covered various aspects of decolonization and related issues in its daily news programmes and current affairs magazines in the official and non-official languages. During the period under review, two *UN in Action* television programmes were produced on East Timor, one on the work of the International Organization of Migration in helping East Timorese return home, and the other on the changing role of peacekeepers in East Timor.

9. United Nations Radio in its news programmes continued to report on the work of the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee. News and feature reports covered such issues as the situation in East Timor and the work of UNTAET, the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), the question of Western Sahara and the talks on Western Sahara in Berlin, the Caribbean regional seminar on decolonization held at Havana in May 2001 and the observance on 8 December 2000 of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

10. During the reporting period, extensive coverage was given by United Nations Radio to the situation in East Timor, including daily developments related to the work of UNTAET, in its live broadcasts in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, as well as the daily news programmes in Portuguese.

11. United Nations Radio also conducted a number of interviews in English and Portuguese on the situation and developments in East Timor with major national and international personalities, including: Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Transitional Administrator for East Timor; Xanana Guzmão, East Timorese political leader; and José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Government.

12. In addition, United Nations Radio produced 11 magazine/feature programmes dealing with various aspects of decolonization, including one on the anniversary of East Timor's decision to become independent. Most features were made available in Arabic, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

13. A two-part feature dealt with the current situation in Western Sahara. Several news features looked into the question of decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Challenges faced by small island Non-Self-Governing Territories and the dwindling interest of representatives of those Territories in the Caribbean to attend United Nations seminars on decolonization were discussed in separate radio features. A feature focusing on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) explained Argentina's claim to the islands.

V. Publications

14. *The United Nations and East Timor*, a new publication by the Department of Public Information, was issued in English and Portuguese in August and September 2000 respectively. It is a brief history of the United Nations involvement in East Timor, which culminated in the organization by UNAMET of a popular consultation on the future of East Timor in 1999 and in the establishment of UNTAET in October 2000.

15. The question of decolonization was highlighted in the Department's popular as well as institutional publications — particularly the booklet *UN in Brief* (issued in all six official languages), in its 2000 editions (DPI/2020/Rev.1); the reference paper entitled "United Nations Conferences and Observances" in its 2000 and 2001 editions (Nos. 39 and 40); and the best-selling reference book *Basic Facts about the United Nations* (2000 edition, DPI/2155), which devoted an entire chapter (chap. 7) to the United Nations action in the area of decolonization.

16. The *UN Chronicle*, the Department's quarterly magazine, continued to provide in-depth coverage of the work of the General Assembly in the field of decolonization. It reported on the Assembly's adoption at its fifty-fifth session of the recommendations of the Fourth Committee; the Assembly's commemoration on 8 December 2000 of the fortieth anniversary of its adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/146 declaring the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism; and discussions in the Fourth Committee regarding the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories still in existence.

17. A comprehensive account of decolonization issues for the year 1998 (24 pages) was published in the *Yearbook of the United Nations* (vol. 52). The 1999 edition — currently under preparation — will also contain comprehensive coverage of decolonization issues.

VI. Internet

18. A web page (www.un.org/Depts/dpi/decolonization/main.htm) created in February 2000 to highlight developments in the area of decolonization continued to be updated. In addition to posting all decolonization-related United Nations documents, the page provides a brief history of decolonization, explains the role and work programme of the Special Committee and regularly updates its activities, including the proceedings of various regional seminars, such as the Caribbean regional seminar (23-25 May 2001).

19. The Department also maintains and regularly updates a website on UNTAET on the United Nations home page (www.un.org). It contains summary briefing notes, documents and regulations. The Department also maintains the page for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) on the United Nations website. It has offered the Mission to develop and maintain a section within the website dealing with reports emanating from the field.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

20. During the period covered by the present report, United Nations information centres organized various activities aimed at disseminating information about and promoting awareness of the United Nations work on decolonization. These include the organization of press conferences and lectures, participation in roundtables, production of information material, preparation of press releases and the arrangement of audio and visual products on the issue.

21. Following are some examples of the activities carried out by United Nation information centres:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre at Lisbon organized a press conference for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in East Timor at an International Donors Meeting on East Timor at Lisbon in June 2000; a press release in English was produced and distributed to the Portuguese media and communicated to the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. On the anniversary of the popular consultation in East Timor, the Director of the Centre issued a press release on the role of the United Nations and introduced a book produced by the Department. In March 2001, the Director gave a lecture on the subject of "The political Transition in East Timor and State-building" at a Conference attended by government officials, non-governmental organizations and the media;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre at Sydney promoted the work of UNTAET by organizing a press conference for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Transnational Administrator for East Timor during his visit to Australia in October 2000. Press releases were issued prior to his visit as well as following his final press conference. The Centre facilitated interviews of the Special Representative with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service and the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) Television during his trip to Canberra. Together with corporate sponsors, the Centre produced a short video and two public service announcements on the role of the United Nations in East Timor. The products were shown on all television networks, in cinemas and prior to a sporting event drawing 100,000 spectators;

(c) In June 2000, the United Nations Information Centre in London issued a press release on the talks on Western Sahara held in London by a United Nations delegation headed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General;

(d) The United Nations Information Centre in Rome participated in a meeting on the subject of "The Principle of Self-determination as a Fundamental Right of All Peoples in the World". The meeting was organized by the Italian Parliamentary Group in support of Western Sahara. The Centre referred extensively to the report of the Secretary-General of 20 February 2001 on the situation in Western Sahara (S/2001/148);

(e) In December 2000, the United Nations Information Centre in Moscow and the Russian Centre for Scientific and Cultural Cooperation organized a roundtable on the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration of Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the meeting, the Director of the Centre focused on the main trends characterizing the current situation on the African continent within the context of globalization, as well as on the relationship between developing and developed countries.

United Nations A/AC.109/2001/20

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 June 2001

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resolution adopted by the Special Committee at its 3rd meeting, on 18 June 2001

Dissemination of information on decolonization

The Special Committee,

Having examined questions relating to the dissemination of information on decolonization,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and other resolutions and decisions of the United Nations concerning the dissemination of information on decolonization, in particular General Assembly resolution 55/145 of 8 December 2000,

Recognizing the need for flexible, practical and innovative approaches towards reviewing the options of self-determination for the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to achieving the goals of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Reiterating the importance of dissemination of information as an instrument for furthering the aims of the Declaration, and mindful of the role of world public opinion in effectively assisting the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve self-determination,

Recognizing the role played by the administering Powers in transmitting information to the Secretary-General in accordance with the terms of Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations,

Aware of the role of non-governmental organizations in the dissemination of information on decolonization,

1. *Approves* the activities in the field of dissemination of information on decolonization undertaken by the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat;

01-41497 (E)

2. *Considers it important* to continue its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories;

3. *Requests* the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to take into account the suggestions of the Special Committee to continue their efforts to take measures through all the media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization and, inter alia:

(a) To continue to collect, prepare and disseminate, particularly to the Territories, basic material on the issue of self-determination of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(b) To seek the full cooperation of the administering Powers in the discharge of the tasks referred to above;

(c) To maintain a working relationship with the appropriate regional and intergovernmental organizations, particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, by holding periodic consultations and exchanging information;

(d) To encourage the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the dissemination of information on decolonization;

(e) To report to the Special Committee on measures taken in the implementation of the present resolution;

4. *Requests* all States, including the administering Powers, to continue to extend their cooperation in the dissemination of information referred to in paragraph 2 above.

United Nations A/AC.109/2001/21

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 June 2001

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resolution adopted by the Special Committee at its 3rd meeting on 18 June 2001

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations

The Special Committee,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 1970 (XVIII) of 16 December 1963, in which the Assembly requested the Special Committee to study the information transmitted to the Secretary-General in accordance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations and to take such information fully into account in examining the situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 55/137 of 8 December 2000, in which the Assembly requested the Special Committee to continue to discharge the functions entrusted to it under resolution 1970 (XVIII),

Stressing the importance of timely transmission by the administering Powers of adequate information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter, in particular in relation to the preparation by the Secretariat of the working papers on the Territories concerned,

Having examined the report of the Secretary-General,[1]

1. *Reaffirms* that, in the absence of a decision by the General Assembly itself that a Non-Self-Governing Territory has attained a full measure of self-government in terms of Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, the administering Power concerned should continue to transmit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter with respect to that Territory;

2. *Requests* the administering Powers concerned to transmit or continue to transmit to the Secretary-General the information prescribed in Article 73 *e* of the

[1] A/56/67.

01-41503 (E)

Charter, as well as the fullest possible information on political and constitutional developments in the Territories concerned, within a maximum period of six months following the expiration of the administrative year in those Territories;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that adequate information is drawn from all available published sources in connection with the preparation of the working papers relating to the Territories concerned;

4. *Decides*, subject to any decision that the General Assembly may take in that connection, to continue to discharge the functions entrusted to it under Assembly resolution 1970 (XVIII), in accordance with established procedures.

United Nations A/AC.109/2001/22

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 June 2001

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resolution adopted by the Special Committee at its 6th meeting, on 21 June 2001

Special Committee decision of 12 July 2000 concerning Puerto Rico

The Special Committee,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Considering that the decade of the 1990s, was proclaimed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, as the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and that under resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly declared the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Bearing in mind the nineteen resolutions and decisions adopted by the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico, contained in the reports of the Special Committee to the General Assembly,

Recalling that 25 July 2001 marks the one hundred and third anniversary of the intervention in Puerto Rico by the United States of America,

Further recalling the diverse initiatives taken by the political representatives of Puerto Rico and the United States in recent years, which have thus far failed to set in motion the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Stressing the need for the United States to lay the groundwork for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Taking into account the proposals to convene a sovereign Constituent Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico as part of the search for realistic procedures

01-42419 (E)

which would make it possible to launch the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Aware that Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, has been used for over fifty years by the United States Marines to carry out military manoeuvres, thus limiting access by the civilian population to a space scarcely a quarter of the island, and having a negative impact on the health of the population, the environment and the economic and the social development of the Territory,

Regretting that, the Government of the United States has resumed its military manoeuvres and bombings on Vieques Island, which is inhabited, removing and incarcerating hundreds of peaceful demonstrators, including political personalities, and imposing further restrictions on the civilian population,

Noting the consensus among the people as well as in the Government of Puerto Rico on the urgency of halting military manoeuvres on Vieques Island and on the return of occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico,

Further noting the consensus among the people of Puerto Rico in favour of the release of all Puerto Rican prisoners who have been serving sentences in United States prisons on cases related to Puerto Rico's independence,

Recalling the release of eleven Puerto Rican political prisoners in 2000,

Further noting that the final document of the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cartagena, Colombia on 8 and 9 April 2000,[1] reaffirms the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and requests the Special Committee to continue actively pursuing the issue of Puerto Rico,

Having heard statements and testimonies representative of various viewpoints among the people of Puerto Rico and their social institutions,

Having considered the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico,[2]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution to the question of Puerto Rico;

2. *Reiterates* that the Puerto Rican people constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own and unequivocal national identity;

3. *Calls upon* the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility of expediting a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico;

[1] A/54/917-S/2000/580, annex.
[2] A/AC.109/2001/L.3.

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that, during the past two years, progress has been achieved towards the implementation of a mechanism ensuring the full participation of representatives of all viewpoints prevailing in Puerto Rico, such as the proposals to convene a sovereign Constituent Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico;

5. *Reiterates its hope* that the General Assembly of the United Nations will give comprehensive consideration to the question of Puerto Rico in all its aspects;

6. *Urges* the Government of the United States, in line with the need to guarantee to the Puerto Rican people their legitimate right to self-determination and the protection of their human rights, to order the immediate halt of its armed forces' military drills and manoeuvres on Vieques Island, which is inhabited, return the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico, halt the persecution, incarcerations, arrests and harassment of peaceful demonstrators, immediately release all persons incarcerated in this connection, respect fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and economic development, and decontaminate the impact areas;

7. *Requests* the President of the United States of America to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in United States prisons on cases related to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico;

8. *Notes with satisfaction* the report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee,[2] in compliance with its resolution of 12 July 2000;

9. *Requests* the Rapporteur to report to the Special Committee in the year 2002 on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous review.